

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01 L-03

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 MC-02 EB-11

SAJ-01 COME-00 DRC-01 /096 W

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R 121011Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7634

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

CSAF

SECDEF

S E C R E T OSLO 178

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS BEXP NO

SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN INTEREST IN REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR F-104

REFS: A) OSLO 4681; B) USNATO 21; C) BRUSSELS 62

1. THE NORWEGIANS ARE ACTIVELY INTERESTED IN THE QUESTION OF F-104 FOLLOW-ON REPLACEMENT. AT A RECENT DINNER, ACTING DCM ENGAGED DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL IN CONVERSATION CONCERNING HIS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AS CHAIRMAN OF EUROGROUP AND ELICITED COMMENT THAT F-104 REPLACEMENT IS "ONE OF THE KEY ISSUES" TO BE DECIDED. FOSTERVOLL SAID THAT, EVEN THOUGH DECISION IS MUCH MORE URGENT FOR BELGIANS AND DUTCH THAN FOR NORWEGIANS (WHO WILL NOT BEGIN REPLACEMENT TILL LATE 1970'S), NORWAY AND OTHERS COULD--AND BY IMPLICATION SHOULD--TAKE DECISION NOW ON WHAT THEY WILL PURCHASE

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WHEN TIME COMES.

2. TO EMBOFF'S COMMENT THAT FRENCH SEEM TO BE VERY ENERGETICALLY PUSHING MIRAGE SUPER F-1, FOSTERVOLL RESPONDED THAT FRENCH MUST BE MADE TO REALIZE THAT THEY CAN'T HAVE ALL THE ADVANTAGES OF THE ALLIANCE WITHOUT FULL PARTICIPATION. THE BURDEN OF HIS REMARKS WAS THAT MIRAGE PURCHASE SHOULD BE USED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO BRING FRANCE BACK INTO MILITARY COOPERATION WITH ALLIANCE. EMBOFF NOTED THAT U.S. IS GREATLY INTERESTED IN DECISION ON F-104 REPLACEMENT, OBSERVING THAT CHOICE OF U.S. PRODUCT WOULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT BURDENSARING BENEFIT. BORROWING AMBASSADOR STRAUSSZ-HUPE'S RECENT COGENT REASONING (REF C), HE ALSO SPOKE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE WE ATTACH TO THE LONG-RANGE BILATERAL TIES THAT ARE STRENGTHENED BY SUCH MEANS AS TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION AND PILOT TRAINING IN THE U.S. FOSTERVOLL ACKNOWLEDGED THE IMPORTANCE OF BOTH POINTS, BUT ASKED IF IT WAS NOT TRUE THAT MIRAGE SUPER F-1 IS A VERY GOOD PLANE; HE SEEMED SURPRISED WHEN EMBOFF COMMENTED THAT, WHILE HE HAD NO EXPERTISE IN SUCH MATTERS, HE HAD BEEN LED TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO REACH A FINAL JUDGMENT SINCE ENGINE FOR MODEL UNDER CONSIDERATION HAS YET TO BE QUALIFIED.

3. CHIEF MAAG HAS LEARNED MEANWHILE THAT TWO SENIOR NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS (ERIK HIMLE, SECRETARY GENERAL OF DEFENSE MINISTRY, AND SVERRE HAMRE, CHIEF OF LOGISTICS IN MINISTRY) WILL GO TO BRUSSELS JANUARY 21 FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON F-104 REPLACEMENT. SIGNIFICANCE OF THEIR TRIP IS HEIGHTENED BY FOSTERVOLL'S SUGGESTION THAT NORWAY MIGHT BE WILLING TO REACH DECISION ON NEXT GENERATION FIGHTER AT SAME TIME AS BELGIANS AND DUTCH.

4. WE UNDERSTAND FROM LOCAL NORTHROP REPRESENTATIVE THAT NORTHROP PRESIDENT TOM JONES WILL VISIT OSLO JANUARY 17-18 FOR FURTHER TALKS WITH NORWEGIANS ON ADVANTAGES OF NORTHROP PURCHASE. TIMING OF HIS VISIT DOUBTLESS RELATED TO ONGOING EUROGROUP DISCUSSIONS.

5. COMMENT: WE HAVE THE DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT FOSTERVOLL IS LEANING TOWARD MIRAGE, IF ONLY BECAUSE HE HOPES A MIRAGE PURCHASE COULD BE USED TO PRING FRANCE BACK INTO THE EUROGROUP. HOWEVER UNREALISTIC THIS HOPE MAY BE, IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE, GIVEN THE NORWEGIANS' FEELING OF ISOLATION OUTSIDE THE EC, THEIR CONTINUED STRONG RELIANCE ON NATO, AND THEIR DISCOMFORT OVER DISCUSSIONS OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT BASED ON WEU OR EC. FOSTERVOLL'S
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REMARKS STRENGTHEN OUR EARLIER BELIEF (REF A) THAT THE TIME IS NOW FOR ANY SPECIAL U.S. EFFORT TO INFLUENCE A DECISION IN FAVOR OF PURCHASE OF ONE OF THE AMERICAN COMPETITORS TO MIRAGE. BYRNE

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